

251 CLUB



Passin' through

William Rockford Jr.
never met a Vermont
town he didn't like.

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Fervent fans of Vermont

Members of 251 Club take the scenic route

MONTPELIER — There are 251 cities, towns and villages in Vermont, and there are several hundred individuals who have visited every single one. This is no small feat. The unorganized town of Lewis in the north, for example, has no people in it — never has — and must be entered on a logging road ruled by large logging trucks. If you want to visit Lewis you must have nerve, and if you want to visit all 251 communities you may need some kind of fervid dedication.

Anyway, people do this, and they are members of the 251 Club. The 34-year-old informal organization has members in 37 states and several foreign countries, says club secretary William Rockford Jr. of Montpelier. You need not have visited all 251 to become a member, but you should intend to visit them. Out of about 3,500 club members, Rockford figures a third have met the goal.

Bill and Frances Rockford have. It took about four years. In their snapshot album the Rockfords and son Bill 3d are pictured before village halls, general stores, firehouses, churches, libraries, highway departments, banks, schools, farmers' markets, racetracks and road signs — anything that tells a place's name. "You create friends in each place," Rockford said.

Understand: It's the journey that the club encourages. It's not necessary to prove that you've been to any place, and you're urged not to just drive through. "Stop," Bill Rockford advises. "Walk the roads, talk with people, talk with the town clerk — do something that constitutes involvement."

"The benefit," adds Bill Rockford today, "is to be derived from going." The 251 Club's address is 40 Clarendon Ave., Montpelier 05602.

— DOUGLAS WILHELM